Thompson, T. 2017. Chapter 1: Introduction.
In: Heidegger and Executive Education: The Management of Time. Abingdon, Oxford: Routledge
DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315451855
ebook first published 13 September 2017

New Chapter 1: Introduction

If you want to make money, go into business. If you want to learn how to make money, go to business school. If you want to learn what money is and how it has functioned and what might be the point of making a lot of it, go to university.

(Stefan Collini, *Speaking of Universities*, p.79)

This book is about educating mid-career corporate executives, as dull as that sounds. My argument is aimed at those who are willing to argue for and against the usefulness of every station in the short logical journey that the (pro-education) scholar Stefan Collini outlines, above. The book will do battle with the strange sounding compound term "executive education" and propose that this innocuous seeming practice, as I will introduce it, deserves to be the new means by which we, collectively, can transform some of contemporary society's greatest ills and iniquities, but not by the hubris usually associated with the corporate executive. This transformation is within the grasp of the corporate executive and the executive educator to affect, but like all transformations, it comes at a cost, which is twofold. Firstly, this cost is our willingness to challenge the dominant scripts, the scripts which tells us how we should act, think and feel in the face of the established orders and the predominant traditions. And on top of that significant outlay lies a second and altogether greater cost, but one that helps offset the first: and this requires us to confront the fact of our death, our anxieties and our boredom in the face of the day-to-day orders we routinely execute. This is where I engage with the work of the twentieth-century German philosopher, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), using his reckoning on the theme of being and time to enlighten how executive education can be reconceived and practiced anew: cue philosophy.

The means by which I hope to effect this change is to use academic philosophy to challenge your thinking. As the book's title suggests I'll be enlisting the specific, though not easy to understand, philosophical insights of Heidegger to mount these challenges, together with a range of other thinkers who share in the benefits of Heidegger's philosophy, benefits I hope to convince you of. The next chapter will explain more of my personal reasons for choosing Heidegger as my principle philosophic yeoman, rather than any other philosopher. Though it will take the balance of this book to introduce you to Heidegger's thinking. And when I say *philosophy* I'm referring to a systematic body of thought that has been presented, extended, and defended usually over a lengthy tenure in a professional academic role and setting, as Heidegger did. I don't mean philosophy in the popular sense of a quirky rationale or a personal justification for pursuing a particular course of thinking in a certain idiosyncratic way, in distinction to many other possible personal "philosophies". As such, almost stuffily, it is possible to conceive of the philosophy of Martin Heidegger as a body of work – almost independent of the man himself, as bizarre (and controversial) as that seems – that can be used as a means to reveal hidden assumptions in adjacent or contrary bodies of thought, which is what professional philosophers do for a living, and which is exactly as what I intend to do with regards to the normative thinking in executive education, which I'll come on to.

For those unfamiliar with the philosophical method, this discourse may appear as mere brainy journalism, were it not for the fact that certain rules are nonetheless in play; namely, a cogent and clearly stated partiality to an otherwise balanced argument, whose claims are underpinned with a rigorous and defendable logic, put forward with recourse to historical precedents, and with well-argued discounts regarding that logic. Which leads me to ask, other than a human being of normal capacities, *what is an executive*? What is the justification for them doing the things they do; what counts as a dissident executive in that case; and what constitutes an education of dissent from such an executive norm? What's the reason for dissent anyway? Why should that norm be critiqued? Given these concerns, this book will get you fit, if a little strained, considering the case either way. Given its proper name, what you'll be doing in these pages will be learning to *philosophise*, namely about the crude distinctions called out in this opening quote of Collini's, but about a whole bunch

more besides. The ancient discipline of philosophy, with its reputation for abstract, hair splitting yak, seems a million miles away from the profitable talk of business and the plain doing of money making: never has the pinstripe of business and the corduroy of philosophy seemed so at odds. Which is why you may suffer some straining in the following pages, since practicing philosophy calls on uncommon muscles.

As for the audience to whom this book is directed, you may be undertaking such a course of improvement yourself as an upcoming executive within a company, or feel the need for such improvement, or be the course director of such a programme within a company, a training outfit, or a university. It is the latter body of reader to which I'm most concerned to address, since this book has emerged from my experience working in executive education at a UK University business school (as I'll explain in the next section). Whichever of these you embody, this book is dedicated to those professionals employed by, or on behalf of, firms and enterprises who are nonetheless dissatisfied with their current state of affairs, afraid of what their profession is becoming, and who are looking for an alternative way of thinking about the role of the corporate executive in contemporary and future society. If you're sufficiently intrigued or annoyed by these issues, sitting as you do in a career pause as part of your role as an executive educator, then I encourage you to read on.

The task set here will be hard to achieve, but the reward is membership of a vanguard that pushes executive education out from behind corporate parents – whose low level expectations are conditional on short term changes in competence – into the bright lights of a world looking for inspiration and hope in a vision that exceeds the limited horizons of business as usual.

1.1 What is Executive Education?

For those unfamiliar with executive education I would like to ease the reader in to the site of the work I hope to undertake in this book by situating my own involvement in executive education. I work at the Cranfield University School of Management (hereafter, Cranfield), a graduate-only

business school in the UK, where management is just one of the specialisms of the wider Cranfield University[1]. Though it does confers its own degree-awarding programmes, Cranfield also run a wide range of unaccredited programmes which make up its portfolio of executive education[2] that are of roughly equal proportion in revenue and student numbers to the accredited programmes. My role in executive education is currently within Cranfield's Centre for Customised Executive Development. This centre provides non-credit-bearing executive education and development (a distinction I will elaborate later) for the management and senior executive[3] populations of large, mostly international, corporations. The teaching faculty for these programmes is drawn from Cranfield's academic faculty who teach on Cranfield's flagship Masters of Business Administration (MBA). A typical (if parodied) individual consumer of this executive education – in distinction to the corporate client who may commission such a programme for a population of senior executives – is often, though not predominantly, male, mid-thirties to fifties in age, greying, wearing a dark suit, working for a large corporation, well paid, and principally as someone who gives and receives orders.

In order to build on the unusual and non-credit-bearing status of the executive education that I'm involved in running, and which forms the context of my argument here; and in order for the reader to gauge the nature of education referred to in this book – if the reader, in fact, deems this education at all – it is worth reiterating (for the sake of mainstream educator say, or possibly those unaccustomed to non-credit-bearing graduate-only teaching, or those unfamiliar with education for executives in corporations) that while I am based in higher education I am not addressing in this book the business-studies student normally conceived: not undergraduates, nor postgraduate students, nor part-time higher education students. My referencing of the executive's late-career juncture is not simply to differentiate amongst institution-oriented provisions of executive education – where, say, some institutions, for whatever andragogic reasons, favour training a workforce in preparation for their subsequent employment, versus those which offer ongoing education to those already in employment – but rather to differentiate between the attitudes towards the workplace, towards the society in which work in general does or does not make sense for this echelon, and how these views are influenced by successive life stages. As will be seen later, the (sometimes comic)

spectre of a mid-life crisis, and a late-career executive's corresponding appetite for existential reflection in the midst of their hyper-capitalist endeavours,[4] are all important contributing factors in how and whether executive education is conceived. Crudely speaking, our appetites for existential reflection increase along with our age, placing my study here firmly at the far end of a simplistic educational spectrum that begins with primary, then secondary, thence to tertiary and higher, but proceeding to what I am tempted to call "terminal" education – a coinage in contrast to the more palatable descriptors in common use such as 'life-long learning'[5] or "adult education" or "professional-" or "workplace-learning". As bleak and as nihilistic as the terminal note sounds, the subject of this book – given the Heideggerian theme that I will be using – will not flinch from such time-related topics as death and finitude as they operate on the corporate executive tasked with executing, as well as operating under, the capitalist order. Quite the contrary; as the reader will have glanced from the contents page, my analysis will emerge through the rather melancholy-sounding Heidegger-inspired themes of death, anxiety, boredom, as well as through the less melancholy but still time-related themes of technology, history, and the event.

A typical client of executive education would be a large multinational corporation, whose Human Resources department is often responsible for commissioning a programme, and for whom there is often a senior company official, a senior vice president, acting as a sponsor to the development initiative. A typical participant of a programme of executive education would be the previously mentioned senior executive, who is usually drawn from populations of between one-hundred and up to one-thousand executives, depending on the size of the company: the cohort size of a typical programme is around twenty; and the content of the programme will vary depending on the client, but usually include management-oriented themes such as leadership, strategy, finance, supply chain, marketing, and change. What then is the purpose of one of these programmes of executive education?

In the capitalist order we operate under, each company must achieve sufficient profitability to cover the cost of capital. Otherwise known as financialization – and given that the sole duty the executive has is towards his or her shareholders – this value-based approach requires executives to maximise

shareholder value in each financial period, to ensure a favourable evaluation in the stock market. When the stuff of business can only be described in terms of "assets," executives are effectively labouring-rentiers, directing the production of income from assets, principally human assets. As Michel Aglietta explains, "[t]his approach influences human resource management practices at two distinct levels. First, corporations have systematically deployed strategies of labour-cost minimization in order to satisfy the profitability constraints imposed by financialization. For a given size of the workforce, such a strategy may take the form of a restrictive pay policy or the limitation of training expenditures. Second… by using temporary labour arrangements through fixed-term employment contracts, temporary-agency workers and subcontracting, companies can recruit a workforce without any long-term commitment" (Aglietta, 2016: p.126). Normative executive education is, *inter alia*, intended to promote this neoliberal and exploitative agenda. Whatever the stated intention of such a programme, all programmes of executive education are intended to improve the corporation's competitive advantage in its marketplace: a basis of productivity which I will challenge, using the thinking of Martin Heidegger.

1.2 The Problem with Executive Education

However, executive education embodies a paradox of values. On the one hand, represented by "executive," is the dominant neoliberal ideology in the guise of the corporate executive. Executing on behalf of the neoliberalist doctrines of freedom of enterprise and boundless market exchange, this regent of the dominant economic order carries out, as effectively as he or she can, what is obviously required by, and for, this order i.e. to make money and accumulate capital (more on these obviousnesses in a moment). On the other hand, in "education" resides a different set of values, the most obvious of which, for the philosopher Judith Butler at least, are those which "address how we learn to think, to work with language and images, and to read, to make sense, to intervene, to take apart, to formulate evaluative judgements and even to make the world anew" (Butler, 2014: p.17). Across this divide of values the glances exchanged are a mix of eye-glazing bafflement, risible

smirks, pious disdain, and, quite possibly, since we're working with language here, askance glares of withering insouciance. The coinage "executive education," together with the university-based business schools that have minted (from) this lucrative provision of non-accredited training programmes – aimed at executives, leaders and functional managers within corporations – in no way inaugurates this nettled derision across the divide of values outlined: the battle lines have been drawn these centuries past, with the "executive education" incarnation of the distinction emerging as recently as the 1940s and the GI bill .

The paradox on prominent display in the compound term "executive education" is that between commerce and the humanities, between the progressive goals of business and the equally progressive values of the liberal arts, with a slew of (mostly pro-humanities) commentators keen to prove – though annoyed to have to – the obvious historical precedents to this distinction. Both Michael Roth (Roth, 2014: p.21) and Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum, 2010: p.13) place the birth of the distinction coincident with the founding of the United States; Stefan Collini (Collini, 2012: p.23) rewinds this commencement to the Middle Ages, with the founding of the universities of Bologna, Paris, Oxford and Cambridge in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; Peter Brooks and Hilary Jewett (Brooks and Jewett, 2014) restrict their survey to the twentieth century, mostly; whereas Rens Bod leads the historical survey with his A New History of the Humanities (Bod, 2013). Perhaps it falls to an examination of Plato's Republic (Cooper, 1997) at 360 BCE the earliest surviving European utopia, to differentiate the educative needs for Rulers, Auxiliaries, and workers (Plato's utopia makes no educative provision for workers), as well as question the staggering wealth inequality familiar to us today.

This scramble for the high historical ground puts in jeopardy our contemporary notion of what Saul Bellow calls the "flimsiness" and "trashiness" of our modern talk of "values", (including, it would seem, my own talk of a paradox of values), speared as this notion is by the grand flags of "truth" and "good" planted by these impassioned historical surveys. It is hard to crawl out from under the weight of the precedent by which the humanities squash the figure of the corporate executive, our

regent-cum-subaltern of the dominant economic order. But it's more than obvious who's laughing now. The lamenting tones of these humanities commentators come in the face of a crisis in their discipline, the protagonist of which is the jackbooted executive, who shows no sign of lessening the current order's demand for instrumentality, evidence-based impact, marketable skills, managerial efficiency, financialized human capital, and above all, profit from pretty much everyone in society.

As an example, the most depressing stop-over that Martha Nussbaum tells us about on her recent world tour, investigating the state of the liberal arts in education, has been England; "the nation sees itself as primarily commercial and the humanities as peripheral to national identity, elite frills…Whatever the accuracy of this diagnosis, England, at least since the Thatcher era and perhaps long before, has devalued the humanities more aggressively than any other educational culture, demanding that they show that they can contribute to narrowly commercial goals" (Nussbaum, 2010: p.153). Does then executive education, in its apparent mediating guise as I've announced it in this opening, represent a new renaissance, a nascent form of reconciliation, a rebirth of the seriously-schooled executive, heralding perhaps a new order altogether? James Maroosis, for one, in his book Liberal Arts of Management (Maroosis, 2016), would be open to that suggestion. "The Studia Humanitatis" says Maroosis, "constitutes a five-part rhetorical structure consisting of poetry…, grammar…, rhetoric…, history…, and moral philosophy…This curriculum was meant to give students the tools they need to live an active life, a life of leadership, obligations, and responsibilities. It teaches comportment, competencies, and a commitment to excellence. This is not an 'academic' curriculum but a managerial one!" (*sic*) (ibid: loc.719). He goes on to make the invigorating claim – one that I could warm to – that the humanities would make an ideal starting point for a management development programme, one which "applied" the liberal arts in the context of corporations: though he does admit later that "[a]t best, this model is a curiosity; however, parallels remain and looking for parallels is what this book is all about" (ibid: loc.979). This disappointing throwaway comment of his reveals, for me anyway, if not the sublimated nervousness he's bravely channelling, then the incongruity of the connection he's making. When does the splurting of tea in the senior common rooms of Collini's elite universities, over such accommodations and "applications" as Maroosis's,

turn into commitments, as Butler says, "to make the world anew"? Or to put it more positively, is there an opportunity (Kairos in Greek: a term Maroosis uses frequently) to use the aegis of the all-powerful, though lumpen, figure of the corporate executive to flaunt a new order? I'm suggesting there is, and as the opening quote demonstrates, it involves an existential look at time.

On show in these opening words are "obviousnesses" which, if you trust Louis Althusser, point to some hidden ideologies: the obviousness of executing, or carrying out, the orders of the capital-accumulating market state where, as Malcolm Bull says, "every minute of the day has been colonized by capitalism" (Bull, 2016a: p.49), the current ideological tempo of which we ourselves are the beat; along with the obviousness of the sinful status of any dissent, or trespasses against this master order, such as the imposition of a state-regulated brake on the unchecked imperatives of the market, as the scholar Collini would rather (Collini, 2016: p.199), in the face of the normative chock-kicking and barnacle-scraping opposite, championed, among others, by the former Universities & Science minster David Willetts (Willetts, 2016: p.62). And how fares the obviousness of "education," subpoenaed as the concept seems to have been to stand before the master order, wrenched from its golden paideia heritage and made to account for itself? Not well, I fear: it is no longer obvious that what is being shaped is the whole person of the executive, distinct from the whole market they serve. Consider this book then as one of the many individual (singularly, puny) arrows raining down to stay the gorgon, the monster who turns our precious time into a mere plaything for capital-accumulation. Honed against the flint of the humanities, and drawn from the quiver of a particularly problematic philosopher, my arrow's sharp point has been dipped in the potent, if obscure, philosophy of time of Martin Heidegger.

As a quick cut-to-the-chase for those new to Heidegger, it is Heidegger's innocent-sounding "ontological difference," a difference between beings and (a helpfully capitalised 'b') Being – or in other words, between what-is and Being, or between entities and the Being of those entities, which entails that entities are not Being, and Being is not an entity – that is his "single great contribution to Western thought" (Dreyfus and Spinoza, 2006: p.265). Stack on top of that how he regards time

as the defining limit of Being, a directed-towardness that defines Being, and you have a sense of the tricky unpicking required ahead to recalibrate our notion of the time of being.

In this way the tuning fork of Collini's opening quote strikes the right note of laying down the logic that differentiates between the respective activities available to the mid-career executive, and it is in this fashion that I take aim at contemporary executive education practices that trample on Heidegger's "ontological difference". The juicy target I've chosen for this thesis is less than the untameable twins of capitalism and neoliberalism themselves, but more than the specific items of any low level training that would claim to constitute a programme of executive education. Based on Stefan Collini's helpful heuristic – "[o]ne rough and ready distinction between university education and professional training is that education relativizes and constantly calls into question the information which training simply transmits" (Collini, 2012: p.56) – and for the purposes of my argument, I differentiate between executive training, executive development, and executive education as follows. Training simply transmits information to the subject, in this case the executive; development attempts to improve the executive's coping with that information; and education is a dialectic process where the executive is encouraged to constantly question any information deemed relevant to theirs, their paymaster's and their subordinate's, future state or well being. This book will concentrate solely on executive *education*, believing this to be better suited to the task of questioning current assumptions than its cousins of training or development, and where a reconceived education can provide a radically new framework for reconsidering the educative purpose for mid-career executives.

1.3 An Overview of the Argument

Succinctly stated, the argument this book puts forward is as follows. Executions are predicated on their function of effectively carrying out the orders on which they are based: it is the task of *progressive* executive education to challenge that predication through encouraging, specifically, an

executive's existential experience of time: such cultivated experiences in executive education contribute to an enhancement and a deepening of the vitality of life, despite their discomfort.

More broadly stated, my ambition in this book is to raise the temperature, so to speak, of how we think of and practice executive education in institutions such as mine. I will attempt to raise the stakes of the game executive education is currently playing in and for society, which is currently concerned with improving the ability of executives to make their parent organisations more competitive in local, regional, and global markets. The change I'm speaking about is intended to reveal the potential for attaining a higher and a more socially responsible set of rewards from a discrete (existential) increase in risk. The intent of this book is to advocate for an increase in the militancy of thinking about, and practicing, executive education, from a cold set of assumptions and educative practices that naturalises the short term response "I'm just providing them with what they say they want," into a hotter climate of dissent at that naturalising process, one which rebels against the constraints imposed by unquestioned assumptions about what is necessary. The down payment on this radical questioning is provided by a new philosophy of executive education, one that can be translated into a distinctly progressive practice of executive education. This readjustment in temperature is precipitated by the encouragement of an executive's existential conception of *time*. I will conclude my argument by enumerating a set of Heidegger-inspired principles for the reconception of time in the practices of executive education, and the benefits an adoption of this reconception brings that are in excess of merely a smarter and more humane (global) business sector. What, then, does it mean today to think and to act transformatively with respect to executive education? To answer that, I divide the book's overall argument into two parts, beginning with an outline of its *speculative* aspects, followed by some considerations for a *programmatic* manifestation of that speculation as the last chapter.

Firstly, it is incumbent upon me to point to the most fundamental assumption of all about what it means to execute, what it means to carry out some sort of directive or order. This is the topic of Chapter Two. Only once this is identified as the essence of all executions can the argument move

beyond the contingencies of any specific execution in a specific context. Only without the encumbrance of the specificity of an actual execution of an actual order, no matter how those two terms are conceived – and I will be spending the majority of this book elaborating on their respective conceptions – can we hope to have a speculative and philosophical discussion about the relation of an order to an execution *per se*, without falling into the trap of unconsciously upholding the (so called) preordained natural sequence from order to execution and then squabbling about the relativities of how best to execute that order. My first contribution to raising the temperature of how we speak of, and enact, executive education is to introduce what I call the *order-execution cognate* as this most fundamental essence of execution; the sequential concatenation between the identification of an order (or the consequential, but unchallenged, adoption of an order in the guise of its execution, or of compulsive deference, say, to a standing order) and its eventual execution, or its being carried out. I refer the reader to a fuller introduction of the order-execution cognate in Chapter Two, preferring to use this introductory opportunity to continue the outline of my overall argument.

Secondly, no sooner have I established this fundamental essence of execution do I then need to show how the apparently necessary relation of an execution to an order is itself a false necessity, also the topic of Chapter One. For this task of deconstruction I will draw from aspects of a lifelong intellectual programme of another philosopher, this time the contemporary Brazilian theorist and part-time politician, Roberto Mangabeira Unger (1947-), a longstanding professor of philosophy at Harvard University, though formerly the Brazilian Minister of Strategic Affairs in 2007 and 2015 – a decisive adventure into an explicitly political variant of executive power that has similarities to Martin Heidegger, and relevance to our philosophic endeavours here, as we will see later. Unger's principle thoughts are contained in his three volume *Politics: A Work in Constructive Social Theory* (Unger, 1987). The abiding similarity between my two sponsoring philosophers concerns what they both call the "groundlessness" of our existence, thereby pitching the trajectory of the discussion in a decidedly existential direction, which contributes to my argument for reasons that are about to become apparent.

The topic of Chapters Three to Eight is, thirdly, to further ratify the non-natural status of the relation between order and execution, out from purely abstract speculation into an impetus that compels the executive to rethink their executive capabilities. I use this common and existential strand of thought of both Heidegger and Unger to infect the very notion of execution itself with a trepidation concerning our time left to exist. This trepidation concerns our own mortality and the groundlessness of our existence. As the charitable foundation with the name "80,000 Hours" brazenly shows, our working lives are made up of roughly eighty-thousand hours in total, a consequence of which, as their website says, "means that the choice of career is one of the biggest decisions you'll ever make, so it's really worth figuring out how to use that time for good"[6]. Nothing quite focuses our attention so pointedly as a calculation of the balance of time we have remaining, based on this cold but compelling number. Correspondingly, the lack of unquestionable grounds on which to make this choice of career, or in our case, to choose how you want to play the time we have remaining, leaves us hanging above an abyss of existence. I have no compunction in co-opting existential reflection on the part of the executive to reinforce her commitment to realise the non-natural relation between order and execution, rubbing the noses of those squeamish of such reflection in the clichéd temporal maxim of most money making endeavours – time is money. Quite what time is for an executive will be redefined in the following pages.

Fourthly, as bizarre and as romantically-inspired a promise to redefine time might sound, my argument nevertheless enlists the help from the romanticism movement, specifically, early German Romanticism, to confront head-on the need to reimagine our standard conception of time. I will use Heidegger's book *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1962), published in Germany in 1927, as well as other works across the span of his philosophical career, as a framework for an analysis of the temporal constituents of the order-execution cognate. Whilst I realise what strange bedfellows Romanticism and executive education may make, the core of aspects of the former – namely, the contradiction between the limitless capacities of the individual versus the limitations of structure under which we work – provide a powerful incentive to champion the false necessity of the conjoined order-execution cognate.

Lastly, as promised, I will draw up a programmatic manifestation of my argument that issues from the preceding philosophical speculation (the bulk of this book), the practical aspects of which can be integrated into novel articulations of executive education as well as actual practice. This is where the rubber hits the road, so to speak, when it comes to speaking about progressive executive education, and recognising it when you see it.

All of which leaves you asking, for what reason do I put forward this elaborate argument? Why go to all this trouble? Why not just do a better job of educating executives? Philosophy, of the sort I'm practicing here, is geared towards a struggle to change the world, in some form or other; but the struggle to change the world has to be informed by a conception: this book is that conception. With this logic, you can't change the world with ideas alone, but without ideas you can't change the world. Hence, developed here is my conception with which to change the world through executive education, a practical task almost impossible to carry out without a founding conception. I'm taking the trouble with this elaborate argument as an attempt to understand executive education better by understanding what it can become, which, I'm claiming, is a reinvigorated force for good.

1.4 The Benefits

Since the bulk of the remainder of this book will involve a weighty, arcane and sometimes tortuous analysis of large tracts of Heidegger's difficult thinking on the subject of time and being, and since we are in the last throat-clearing phase of introducing the overall argument of the book, I wanted to take this opportunity to give a more folksy account of my own introduction, over the years, to the philosophy of Heidegger, which may serve the reader by explaining the source of some other motivations running throughout this book, and ultimately the benefit of my approach.

I first encountered Heidegger's writing in my early twenties when I was an undergraduate studying philosophy. At the time I was preparing to enter a Zen Buddhist monastery[7] in the north of England, and I came across repeated references in Heidegger commentaries about the proximity of his

thinking to that of (intellectualised) Zen Buddhism[8]. I spent a lot of my undergraduate time investigating and corroborating these connections prior to actually entering the Zen monastery[9], though at the commencement of my monastic career no further study of Heidegger was possible, or defendable. After six years I left the monastery and pursued interests that eventually led me to work at Cranfield School of Management, by which time my dalliance with Heidegger's thinking had not only returned but been strengthened. With my grounding in Zen, and my interest in Heidegger (particularly his own inexcusable political myopia), I have come to see the danger of uncritical ideological belief, especially since, as Louis Althusser reminds us, "the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order" (Althusser, 1971: p.89)[10]. I feel that this order-based danger is strengthened when, as Eric Hobsbawm says of Pierre Bourdieu, that Bourdieu reminds us "that academic institutions have slowly become the principal sites for the manufacture and definition of social domination in contemporary societies," and that the most implacable of all forms of hidden persuasion is "exercised quite simply by *the order of things*" (Hobsbawm, 2016: p.45, my emphasis).

Finding myself working in just such an institution of social domination, in the field of order-giving and order-taking that is executive education, I couldn't let let these conjunctions pass without critical scrutiny. And so this book has grown out of a Cranfield sponsored PhD thesis in the philosophy of executive education examining exactly this conjunction. It is for the reader to assess the benefits of this undertaking for themselves: my hope is that society might gain from a slightly more self aware body of practice. In recognising the potential for executive education to impact the lives of a highly influential class of individuals, I see in Heidegger's work the possibility for a philosophical reconsideration of the purpose of such a late occurring – career-wise that is – educative undertaking. Thus it is, as part *bildungsroman*, part anthropological approach, that I commend this book to the reader, who may begin to understand my wish to have executives and executive educators appreciate the vast storehouse of opportunity available to them in their role of affecting (almost) unthinkable changes to our world order.

In the next chapter, I'll begin a more in depth exploration of the first and second aspects of my argument – the nature of the order-execution cognate, and its false necessity – before locking horns, in Chapters three to eight, with Heidegger's six conundrums of time – death, anxiety, boredom, technology, history, and event. As an acronym, these six temporal themes spell "the bad," which is highly appropriate given the difficulty of grappling with Heidegger's thinking. In that vein, the next chapter could be called "the ugly," since its task is to break the back of argument; and the last chapter "the good," for its unashamed pragmatism and vitality in laying out considerations for a revised executive education practice.

But by way of the last word in this introduction: I'm under no illusion as to how heterodox this study may seem, put against contemporary executive education practice, with its Bohemian carnival of players, concepts and methods the reader is about to meet, which begs two questions; Who is my intended the audience for this book as a whole, and; What proposition am I putting forward for consideration by this audience? Firstly, this is not a thesis wholly suitable for hard-core Heideggerians, who can rightly criticise my having cherry-picked elements from his thinking at the expense of a lack of fidelity to his broader thought across his collected works (*Gesamtausgabe*), and who may well be uncomfortable with my having glossed over considerable subtleties therein: nor is this a text wholly suitable for senior executives, on grounds of its verbosity: which then beckons an unusual strain of "intermediate reader," someone prepared to temporarily suspend the sharply delineated disciplinary regimes of scholarship and/or profit-making respectively. Which leads me to propose, secondarily, that the method under greatest scrutiny in this book is that of philosophy itself – its troubling tendency to make itself irrelevant to everyday concerns via its often hermetic jargon, at the same time as its capacity to reveal the world anew - and it is this effort that I commend to this hardy reader. To be indulgent of philosophical whimsy, yet merciless to our own capitalist and neoliberal whimsy, is the first step out of the prison of our own *Zeitgeist*, via thinking the unthinkable

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1.6 Notes

[1] Cranfield University is the UK's only wholly postgraduate public university, which specialises in the disciplines of aerospace, defence & security, energy & power, environment & agrifood, manufacturing, transport systems, water, and business & management.

[2] While this may only become apparent to the reader of this book in the course of their reading, I will use my institution's form of executive education as representative of what can be considered a global phenomenon of executive education, as designated by the influential Financial Times "Executive Global Education Rankings" published annually, i.e. as a standard form of executive education, in this case arraigned before my argument concerning its ontological re-conception.

[3] The reader may be confused about the distinction between manager and executive. Quoting from James Burnham's The Managerial Revolution (Burnham, 1942), the author revealingly restricts the title of "manager" to those in charge of technical production processes, and the cherished title of "executive" to the highest paid and highest ranking company official in charge of guiding the company to profit (ibid: pp.72-73). Even today this distinction is representative.

[4] See Thomas Piketty's book Capital in the Twenty-First Century (Piketty, 2014), one that I will be referring to shortly.

[5] See John Field's book Lifelong Learning and the New Educational Order (Field, 2006) for a spirited defence of the integration of lifelong learning into UK government policy.

[6] https://80000hours.org/about (last accessed 1 March 2017).

[7] The reader should be aware that whilst this book will not explicitly foreground (the philosophy surrounding) Buddhism, there remains an abiding, though hidden, sympathy throughout these pages between Zen Buddhism's arch doctrine of "no-self" (Anatta) and Heidegger's staunchly anti-Cartesian rejection of a "subject" or self: this sympathy is what drew me to Heidegger in the first place.

[8] At heart the practice of Soto Zen – founded by Dogen (1200-1253) in Japan – is a fierce anti-intellectual emphasis on pure meditation.

[9] I was a postulant, then a novice monk, between 1988-94, in the "Order of Buddhist Contemplatives". For more information visit www.throssel.org.uk (last accessed October 2016). For those wanting a

textual reference to the practices of this order, see Roshi Jiyu-Kennett's Zen is Eternal Life (Jiyu-Kennett: 1987).

[10] I share the sentiment expressed by Glenn Wallis, Tom Pepper and Matthias Steingass in their book Cruel Theory | Sublime Practice: Towards A Revaluation of Buddhism (Wallis et al, 2012): "In short, while many Buddhists have been trying to escape the trap of post-modernity by retreating down into the thought-free depths of the body, a more useful (and, I will argue, more Buddhist) response is to escape up, into the limits of philosophical rigor" (ibid: p.23). See also Marcus Boon, Eric Cazdyn and Timothy Morton's Nothing: Three Inquiries in Buddhism (Boon et al, 2015: loc.467) for more on Buddhism and Althusser.